THE

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. IV. February 10, 1939 Shebat 21, 5699 No. 20

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SWEEPSTAKES AND JEWISH EDUCATION

SUPPORT OUR RABBINICAL COLLEGES

Religion and Economics

By BEN ZION BOKSER

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EDITORIALS

The Danger of An Unholy Peace

THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY, in a recent editorial, takes the President to task for stressing the stake of religion in democracy as a justification for increasing American armament. The editorial characterizes the President's message to Congress as an "invitation to a holy war." It accuses him of deliberately seeking "to divert the whole matter out of the realm of rational discussion into a realm of emotional ferment where men can be swayed to impulsive action by being frightened with the cry, 'Your religion is at stake.'"

The technique which *The Christian Century* accuses the President of employing has been so often used by governments to secure the sacrificial devotion of men for the defense of "national interests" (which, in the last analysis, turn out to be merely the selfish interests of a small ruling clique) that we can hardly blame the author of the editorial for sounding this note of warning. Nevertheless, though we abhor war no less than does *The Christian Century,* we feel that, in this particular instance, its own words, rather than those of the President, "divert the whole matter out of the realm of rational discussion into a realm of emotional ferment."

The Christian Century admits that "the success which Hitler and Mussolini have won so far in imposing their will on Europe by an appeal to brute force constitutes a challenge to the Christian faith." Its editors in no wise condone the persecutions and oppressions that have everywhere followed the Nazi and Fascist armies or the sowing of discord and hatred that have everywhere preceded them. But how does *The Christian Century* propose to meet the challenge? Its only counsel is "to disavow the idea that religion is ever again to be defended by force of arms, or that an avenging host is ever again to be loosed in the name of religion." It denies that "the way in which to guard their (i.e., the Christians') faith is by resort to the protecting sword of the state."

The fallacy of this absolute pacifism of *The Christian Century* lies in its dissociation of the problem of peace from all the other ethical problems that face humanity. The argument assumes that, if we avoid making war and even preparing for war, we are assured of peace. The fact that other nations are not only preparing for war but avow war to be a legitimate instrument of national policy does not affect the attitude of the absolute pacifists. They assume that it takes two parties to make a quarrel; they will not admit that it takes two parties to maintain a peace.

How does experience validate the assumptions of *The Christian Century?*

Czechoslovakia did not provoke a war with Germany. Under pressure from her supposed friends, she yielded to Germany's demands. Is there peace in Czechoslovakia today? Are her people secure in their rights and liberties? Has not the area of insecurity and of international, interracial and interclass conflict been measurably extended by this surrender to Hitlerism? Has the Non-Intervention Committee brought peace to Spain? What has been the effect of our own embargo on munitions to Spain? Has *it* brought peace? If Franco succeeds in conquering Spain in consequence of our isolationist refusal to sell arms to the Loyalists while the totalitarian powers keep arming the Insurgents and rendering military aid, have we any guarantee against similar tactics being used in Latin American states—the fomenting of rebellions among disaffected elements and the setting up of puppet governments by the totalitarian powers? Is it not apparent that there can be no international peace unless the nations accept some common standard of international morality as expressed in international law: the sanctity of treaties, the inviolability of the territory of friendly nations, the avoidance of lying, incendiary propaganda?

If it is argued that international law should be maintained by peaceful means, we may well ask: What means? The application of economic sanctions is, of course, one method. But the application of economic sanctions, if effective, is sure to be regarded as a *casus belli.* Its value for maintaining peace must, therefore, depend on potential resort to military sanctions, on the determination of the power that applies economic pressure not to yield to a threat of war, and on the ability of that power to resist attack.

There was nothing in the President's message to indicate any intention of direct military intervention in European affairs. There was merely the resolution not to yield to the threat of violence any rights that we enjoy under international law. The argument that war solves no moral problem is true in itself but is irrelevant, for its use implies that we, as a nation, can choose whether there shall be war or peace, regardless of what other nations may do. It brands war as criminal but puts the blame equally on the perpetrator and the victim of the crime. But if military aggresssion is a crime, then to invite such aggression by military weakness is to make oneself in part responsible for the crime.

Until the fiasco of the Munich Pact, THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST favored a policy such as is now advocated by *The Christian Ceutury,* for we cherished the hope that the power of the dictatorships would soon crumble from within and that we should be able to preserve our American democracy without interference from without. Since Munich, we can no longer feel that assurance. We must be calm; we must be wary; but we must be strong.

Might does not make right. But neither does impotence make right. Right demands the responsible use of might, not its surrender to wrong. There is no such thing as a holy war, but there may be an unholy peace, if submission to evil may be called peace. The false prophets have not always been those who have sounded the alarm of war. Often they have been those who have cried " 'Peace! peace!' where there *was* no peace."

Sweepstakes and Jewish Education

RECENTLY Yiddish papers carried full-page advertisements announcing the winners in a lottery conducted in aid of a fund-raising campaign under the joint auspices of the small Yeshivot in New York City, commonly referred to as the Jewish elementary parochial schools. "Sweepstake" winnings ranged from ten thousand and twenty-five hundred dollars down to one dollar. Altogether twenty-two thousand dollars in winnings were distributed out of seventy-seven thousand dollars collected from the sale of one dollar membership tickets. These tickets included a lottery chance number. Each participating Yeshivah was permitted to

retain forty cents for each ticket sold through its own efforts. The balance was forwarded to the central fund to cover lottery winnings, campaign expenses and further distribution of net proceeds among the Yeshivot. The apparent success of this campaign has encouraged those in charge to announce a second one to follow immediately. This time a number of Talmud Torahs are planning to join the campaign or to conduct a similar one of their own.

Much as we should like to see financial stability for our religious institutions, we must nevertheless ask, "Are sweepstake successes good or bad for Jewish education?"

Jewish educational institutions are struggling desperately for their existence. Be it Yeshivah or Talmud Torah, the larger the school or the poorer the neighborhood or the more intensive the program, the greater is the school's financial burden and the weaker are its financial resources. Poor parents cannot pay the required tuition fees for their children, and central agencies have received inadequate funds with which to supply the necessary scholarships.

In New York City the two Federations subsidize a handful of Jewish educational institutions and would gladly be relieved of further support of them, in the belief that such institutions are the responsibility of religious and not charitable agencies like Federation. The Jewish Education Association of New York City has sought to supplement local efforts to take care of scholarship children and has appealed to the more well-to-do elements of the Jewish population for such funds. Unfortunately these elements have not responded to appeals for Jewish education as they have to appeals for charity. Nor has the Jewish Education Association succeeded in creating the fundraising machinery which could parallel that of Federation. There is a difference of opinion, too, whether from a community point of view, such additional machinery is possible or desirable. In the face of these facts what are the Yeshivot and Talmud Torahs to do? Shall they close up, or accept lower standards of Jewish education, or shall they look for new sources of income? Naturally, they choose the latter alternative. Is it any wonder then that, under the circumstances, the alluring promises of a lottery campaign should conquer scruples of propriety?

That desperation should woo "sweepstakes" is understandable. But, can the Jewish community escape the consequence of such affinities? There are legal and moral considerations involved. Already the City Commissioner of Licenses has called upon movie theatres and churches voluntarily to abandon the conduct of bingo and other forms of lottery before he is compelled to invoke the aid of law enforcement agencies. There are those who may argue that the law against lotteries and gambling is contrary to human nature, that such a law is unenforceable, that betting on horse races is a widespread American practice, and that a change in existing laws has been advocated in important Catholic church circles. Despite such arguments, the fact remains that lotteries are illegal in many states. Can the Jewish community through its centrally organized bodies openly or even privately violate the existing law? Can Jewish religious schools accept responsibility for undermining the state laws against gambling, even if it be mass gambling?

More important than legal considerations are the moral implications of sweepstake campaigns for Jewish education. Gambling involves taking chances. In desperate moments individuals have been led to immoral and murderous risks. Gambling and lotteries are contrary to Jewish religious teaching. (Only one famous lottery is clebrated in Jewish history, and that for its grand failure, nameby, the lottery conducted by Haman, which gives its name to Purim.) Can a Jewish religious school nullify Jewish tradition by encouraging its pupils and their parents to gamble with lottery tickets? Directors and Principals of some of the Yeshivot and Talmud Torahs have been heard to say, "We don't like this kind of

fund raising, we know that it encourages hypocrisy, but we can't help ourselves." Will Jewish education and the quality of Jewish living benefit from such attitudes and practices?

Jewish religious schools struggle for their existence because they have had to "sell" religious education, rather than commercial commodities or even charity. Jewish education has made its appeal to the intelligence and character of the individual and the community. It has asked for self-sacrifice and self-discipline in the interests of a better and wiser Jewry and humanity. Shall Jewish education now begin to sell sweepstakes in order to pander to the baser tendencies in human behavior? Can mass gambling serve the spiritual life? Shall fatalism be substituted for Judaism and divine purpose? Let us go back to our historic experience. No matter what the conditions of Jewish existence were, the responsibility for Jewish education was placed upon the parent and upon the community at large. Our ancestors have transmitted to us the tradition of *sekhar limmud* (tuition fees) and *kehillah* support. Our duty today is to strengthen both these sources. In this country we should employ American methods of community organization for these purposes. These methods must, however, derive their inspiration from and serve the ends of Jewish religious ideals and the higher values of American civilization.

Support Our Rabbinical Colleges

THE effort that is being made at the present time to raise funds for the Jewish Theological Seminary calls attention to a need to which the Jewish public should be more responsive than it is. We do not mean merely the need of the Seminary itself, but of all the institutions that are training men for the rabbinate and for other positions of leadership in Jewish life, and that are continuing the tradition of Jewish scholarship.

The rabbi is so often the target of criticism, is so often held responsible for all the shortcomings of our religious and institutional life, that the importance of his function is very commonly underestimated. But, if we try to imagine what Jewish life in America would be like without the activities of the rabbi, what would become of Zionism, Jewish community effort, social work, and, above all, religion, we cannot fail to realize the functional importance of the rabbinate for Jewish life. However we may deplore the necessity for a professional religious leadership, there is no gainsaying that the conditions of modern life, the exigent demands of practical, secular interests on the time and energy of most Jews, is such that the preservation of the values of Jewish life and of the institutions which are needed to give effect to these values calls for the leadership of men who are specially trained for this task and who devote their entire time to it.

Particularly in view of the distracting and harassing problems that confront Jewry in the modern world, of the terror and desperation of great masses of Jews and the perplexity of those who know not where to turn for guidance, comfort and the courage to carry on, is there need for a religious orientation to life, for clarity of spiritual vision and for that firmness of faith which keeps people *faithful* to the best that is in them. It is to the rabbinate that people mainly look for such values, and, though they may sometimes be disappointed in their expectations, one thing is clear, that the chances of their being satisfied and not disappointed depend very largely on the quality of the education that the rabbi receives. There must be made available to the candidate for the rabbinate the best kind of Jewish education which the resources of modern scholarship afford.

We anticipate that efforts to maintain our rabbinical colleges will encounter resistence from many who will urge as an excuse the frequent demand made on them in the present crisis on behalf of the relief of Jewish suffering and the defense of Jewish rights. They should be made to

realize that the defense of rights must go with a concern for the establishment of right, that morale is not unrelated to morals, and that there is no suffering which men have not been able to bear with courage and dignity when sustained by a religious faith. If they do realize this, they will not be sparing in their support of Jewish learning and of the institutions on which we depend for educating Jewish rabbis, teachers, and social workers.

Religion and Economics*

By Ben Zion Bokser

THE relations of religion to economics are enmeshed in a long and intricate history. From the very beginning of time, man has been engaged simultaneously in economic and religious pursuits, and to unravel the story of their relationships would be to recreate the story of human civilization itself. There is, moreover, a current and widespread misunderstanding of the nature and function of religion that impedes our investigation. Religion has been a dynamic process, and it has always changed its forms in consonance with other changes in man's cultural life, but people have often confused the products of the process with the process itself. Religion has been identified with a particular conception of God, with a particular type of ritual, with particular notions of social value, thereby restricting very often the area of religion even to exclude the fruits of new and more recent religious creativity. Religion *has* been all forms through which it has manifested itself in history, but it has been more than that. It has been the continuous process behind each of these forms, a process which, judging by its persistence in the hierarchy of man's interests, must conform to something very profound and vital in human nature.

Religion is born out of the intuition that life is worth living and that there are certain forces within human life and within the cosmic order that will enable man to meet his needs and realize the deepest potentialities of his being. This intuition is implied in other pursuits of man, but religion makes it explicit and proclaims it as an article of faith. Religion glories in this faith, commemorating every moment in human experience which tends to vindicate it, building rationales around it, celebrating it in myth, in ceremony and in ritual. Through all the ramifications of its long history, religion, in the most universal sense of the term, has been this faith, this intuition that the world is essentially good and life worth living.

I

Man stakes his life on the struggle with his environment in the search for the means of his subsistence. When he discovers resources in his human and natural environment which support his quest, the joy of his discovery and triumph is unbounded. But that joy does not remain a private feeling; it seeks outer expression. That is the first function of religion in its relation to economic life—it celebrates the response of the environment to man's quest for a livelihood. The forms of expression vary with the particular elements in the social or natural environment which have figured in the response. The Toda Tribes of Southern India, who depend for their food supply on the buffalo cow's milk and its derivatives, revere the cow, the dairy and even the dairy utensils. Nomads revere the well and the tree which give them the occasional oasis in the otherwise scorched

* This paper was read as one of a series of lectures on the general theme of "Religion and Culture," under the auspices of the Department of Religious Activities of the Y.M.H.A., Lexington Ave., New York, N. Y.

earth of the desert. They may also revere the moon which guides them in their desert marches through the relatively cool night. Hunters have worshipped wild animals, the totems of the tribes; and Indians have been discovered in Peru, living along the sea coast, who have revered the fish; in one case the sardine, and in another the skate.

We are more familiar with religion in agricultural societies and it betrays the same phenomenon. It celebrates the principle of fertility and the seasons of planting, sowing, and above all, in-gathering. When the Pilgrim fathers had been able, after long years of painful struggle, to realize the soil's bounty in the new world, they created the Thanksgiving festival. In doing so, they built on precedent. They wrote but one more chapter in religion's role as man's joyous acceptance of the Power that gives him food, raiment and shelter.

The three major festivals of the Jewish calendar, Pesah, Shavuot, and Succot, were in their original character agricultural celebrations, as their Biblical designations still testify, but were subsequently invested with certain historic associations. The fact that, in time, these festivals came to be identified more and more with the historic associations rather than with gratitude for the bounties of nature is only to be attributed to the gradual transition of Jewish society from a rural and agricultural to an urban and commercio-industrial one. In the new Palestine, where agriculture is once again a large factor in Jewish economy, the agricultural background of these festivals is acquiring a new emphasis. Shavuot, for example, has become once again the occasion for the full expression of all the farmer's joy in the riches of mother earth and the bounties of the harvest. Indeed, the joy of the return to the soil has given the pioneers of the new Palestine a sense of the sanctity of the earth itself. Witness the new lines of Jessie Sampter in her poem, "The Piooner":

"I took the mattock from his hand
To break the strong resistant earth.
He came a stranger to the land
That gave his people birth.
He shouted, "Comrade, over there
Don't break the ground without a prayer."

II

Nature does not make her friendly response without the aid of certain social institutions. Among the nomads and hunters the tribe plays a most important role. Tribal solidarity is, accordingly, a major precept in the religion of those communities. The tribe is revered. Among farmers, the family is particularly important. The productive force of a large family was an indispensable aid in the primitive cultivations of the soil. Religion in rural societies consequently idealizes the family. Worshippers in the modern synagogue are not likely to respond to the sentiment expressed in an ancient characterization of the good life: *eshtekha kegefen poriyah.* ("Thy wife shall be like a fruitful vine"), but the Jewish peasant of antiquity must have meant it quite literally. The apotheosis of parenthood has likewise been a characteristic of agricultural religion, and it has without a doubt been a factor in the development of ancestor worship.

Man originally reacted as to isolated phenomena to those aspects of nature or society which had supported him. The powers that represented the well or the tree had nothing to do with the power that endowed the soil wtih fertility. Since many different aspects of nature often contributed to man's quest for sustenance, he revered many sacred powers and participated in many cults. When the group shifted the basis of its economic life, it also shifted its religious loyalties.

Similarly, the power that seemed to work for the solidarity and success of one tribal or national group was distinct from similar patron powers of other groups. The Judges and the early prophets had a difficult task in keeping the cult of Baal, the divinity of the soil revered by the indigenious population of the country, from displacing or being added to the cult

of Yahweh, the God brought by the Israelites from the desert. When the Israelites were deported to Babylonia, many assumed that they had now come under the sovereignty of the specific Babylonian divinities and that Yahweh worship no longer had any relevance for them.

In time, however, these distinct objects of man's reverence were linked and seen in perspective as but the varying manifestations of one benevolent source. The culmination in this process of fusion was the doctrine of monotheism, the recognition of a Power benevolent to man that permeated the cosmic purpose itself. There is a wide gap between the objects worshipped as God or gods by primitive man and the God idea of, let us say, a sophisticated thinker like Maimonides, but there is at least this continuity between them, that they equally represent aspects or powers within the universe which religion claims to have discovered as friendly to human ideals and committed to the support of man's ultimate needs.

III

It is not always that experience vindicates man's faith in a friendly universe. Nature does not merely yield the resources that support human life. It also produces the powers—the storm, the flood, the drought—that contend against it. Very often it is the human environment which thwarts one. Certain individuals or groups, whether by cunning, inherent superiority or the accidental configuration of circumstances, arrogate to themselves a disproportionately large share in the available resources, goods and services, leaving other individuals in privation and want. At other times, men see the opportunity of improving the pattern of the economic process, of building superior forms of production or distribution, but they find themselves blocked by traditional forms of economic life.

It is here that we enter the second function of religion in relation to economic life. Man's irrespressible intuition that the universe is essentially friendly asserts itself, and he refuses to accept defeat. Religion becomes the dynamic behind man's efforts to remake the environment so that it shall be more responsive to him.

One of the most pathetic gestures in man's daring adventure in changing the world is represented in the many varied formulae of magic by which primitive people, in their bewilderment, tried to force the universe to do their bidding. The formula of magic was futile, objectively speaking, but the faith that gave it birth was valid enough. Nature could be made to do man's bidding provided he knew how to grapple with it. In time, he mastered the secret and, in the techniques of science, he finally did discover a way of curbing nature's hostility and making her more amenable to his heart's desires. Magic and science alike became, in time, specialized activities, detached completely from their religious backgrounds, but they began under religion's auspices and were inspired by the religious hope that the world would not let man down in his quest for a livelihood. Much more intimately connected with the religious process has been the effort to reach the powers behind nature by persuasion through direct petition in prayer, reinforced very often by the gift of sacrifices.

The form of the magic formula or the text of the prayer was conditioned by the specific economic need which inspired it. The Toda Indian prayed for his precious buffalos. The Jew of ancient Palestine fasted and prayed for rain and dew. The early Palestinian Jew's prayer for rain and dew has survived to this very day in most synagogue rituals. Its seasonal re-introduction is a solemn moment in the concluding Passover and Succot services.

IV

No less daring has been man's effort to remake his social environment. History is replete with the records of men—slaves, peasants, merchants, workers — each one against the background of his own day,

struggling to overcome the limitations of the social order that hemmed him in. And religion has played an important role in inspiring this struggle for change. It was after a religious experience in the desert that Moses came to lead the movement for his people's liberation from Egypt; and his appeal was in the name of the God of their ancestors, who abhorred bondage and wanted men to be free.

The prophets battled hard against the tyrannies of their day, seeking to liberate men from injustice and oppression. Religion in these instances did not merely denounce wrong; it fostered a body of specific legislation which would correct the evils. Biblical and Talmudic legislation represents the concretization of the moral impulse through specific reforms, all designed to remove or to mitigate society's impediments to man's economic progress.

Religion's concern with the improvement of the social order has persisted in one form or another, all through history. Even during the Middle Ages it lived on, as Tawney points out in his "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism," in the hopeless yet significant efforts to enforce fair wages and prices and to ban usury. It functioned as the sanction and even inspirations behind the German peasant revolts of the 14th century and it contributed its influences to the Lollard and Chartist movements in British Social history.

In our own day, the leading representatives of the religious forces here and elsewhere have spoken out against the abuses of capitalism and have called for basic changes in our social order. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1932 declared itself unequivocally: "The present industrial order is un-christian, unethical, and anti-social because it is largely based upon the profit motive which is a direct appeal to selfishness." It proceeded to call for the establishment of a cooperative economy. Other Christian denominations have spoken similarly. The Pronouncement on Social justice of the Rabbinical Assembly of America is a comprehensive survey of the evils of our present industrial society and a program for immediate as well as ultimate social and economic changes by which a greater measure of justice may be established in the world. "It is with us a matter of moral principle that an individualistic profit economy is as sinful as it has proved a failure. Our faith in our ideals and in human nature impels us to look to a cooperative economy directed to the good of all men." And again: "We, therefore, hold an individualistic, profit inspired economy to be in direct conflict with the ideals of religion. We maintain that our present system, based, as it is, on acquisitiveness and selfish competition, is in practise a denial of human brotherhood. It exalts the aggrandizement of the individual above the interests of the group, it emphasizes the competitive rather than the cooperative elements in human character. It means that our social order is based on the theorem of 'every man for himself' rather than on the ideal of mutual aid. Our system of individualism has degraded human character; it has appealed to the most selfish instincts in men. It has been tried and found woefully wanting. Under the policy of laissez-faire, society has led itself to the verge of a complete collapse. It has created prosperity for a few and destitution for the multitude." Other Jewish Groups have spoken in a similar vein.

One still remembers the replies of more than 20,000 clergymen to the World Tomorrow Questionnaire on social and economic problems. Fully 88 per cent of the respondents advocated a cooperative commonwealth, i.e., a social order that would produce for use rather than for profit, and as many as 28 per cent were wiling to designate themselves as socialists.

V

It is a daring adventure on which man proceeded in trying to change the world. At times he was rewarded with victory; and then he celebrated the vindication of his faith. Passover commemorates the suc-

cessful change in the status of the Israelites in Egypt from slaves to freedom, and that success is so interpreted as to reinforce man's faith in a power that supports the quest for freedom and justice. But often the quest is futile. The powers that resist, whether in nature or in society, prove more powerful and man finds himself vanquished, an all too common phenomenon. Shall man give up his faith? Shall he admit that he has been defeated?

Here we enter the third function of religion in relation to economic life. Religion tells men to hold on to their faith, for it gives them the assurance that eventually their quest will be rewarded and the world will vindicate them. Religion's assurance of this eventual triumph has taken on different forms. Originally, it was a simple hope in a final reversal in world conditions, so that justice would prevail. Known in Jewish tradition as the "Day of Yahweh," it meant the assurance that, at the end of some unspecified period of time, God would assert himself to respond to the just needs of men. Connected with this was the belief in a Messiah, an ideal leader who would be the agent of God in the remaking of the social order. When it seemed unlikely that this hoped-for change could be effected in a sufficiently accessible future, this belief took a turn to supernaturalism. Another order of life in a supernatural hereafter was posited, where all the frustrations of men would be compensated for and where justice would finally triumph. Under no circumstances. however, would life be lived in vain; it would vindicate itself in time and demonstrate that it had been worth living.

The descriptions of the new order of things varied greatly, but they followed in the main the areas of human frustration for which they were to console. For one thing nature was to be more productive and yield her harvests more readily to man's toil. Israel was to achieve a new freedom and enjoy the prestige of a great people. The oppression of man by man would cease and universal peace would be established in the world. A favorite designation for this ideal world was the *malkut shamayim,* the "Kingdom of Heaven," an ideal social order in which perfect justice, freedom and peace would prevail for all mankind.

This religious assurance was, in a sense, a venture in the dark. It was a promise and a faith for which no valid demonstration could be offered, but it was proclaimed as a certainty because otherwise all meaning and purpose would be crushed out of life.

Some of the forms which this religious assurance has taken on in history may appear to us bizzare, but the faith in a brighter future for mankind has been the inspiration for all men who have struggled for ideals. It is interesting to note that Marxists, in their quest to create a rationale for their social ideals, have developed the doctrine of the inevitability of the revolution, the doctrine that history was committed to the final triumph of their cause. This doctrine is ultimately no more than an assumption, an article of faith, ideologically analagous to the assurance held out by religious tradition.

VI

The functions of religion in relation to economic life have been a great service to mankind. They have helped man in his struggle for subsistence and security. At times, however, these very same functions have taken on exaggerated forms that have proven impediments to human welfare. Loyalty to the environment for whatever response it makes to man's needs has very often developed into an emotional attachment to the status quo that has made religion a force, not for progress but for reaction. People have fought, on religious grounds, the introduction of anaesthetics, irrigation and aviation. They regarded these as unwarranted reflections on Providence. Christian Scientists to this very day object to the science of medicine. Similarly, in the social sphere, religion has very often given its sanction to old institutions, even after they had become liabilities to the best economic interest of

a community. The Rekhabites had become so enmeshed in the loyalties of the old nomadic life in Israel's desert days that they refused to make the change even after the invasion of Canaan, persisting in their abhorrence of all settled life as sinful. The social wrongs of Samaria were an outrage to Amos, but they did not disturb the priest of the royal sanctuary of Beth El who denounced the criticisms of Amos as heresy. Similarly, in our own day, there have been certain religious bodies that have given their blessings to existing property relationships; and to imperialism and, in some manifestations, even to fascism. This exaggerated conservatism of religion has very often found reinforcement in what we have designated as the third function of religion: the assurance of some future vindication of justice, particularly where this future vindication was given a metaphysical setting in a supernatural hereafter. Men have been willing to suffer present misery, consoled by the promies of future bliss.

This perversion of a genuine religious loyalty into a force for reaction is not hard to explain. At times it was the result of an exaggeration of sentiment. With all its imperfections, the environment has served human needs in a multitude of ways, and men are generally blind to the limitations in institutions with which they have pleasant associations as they are to the limitations in people for whom they have a sentimental attachment. In loyalty to the good, men have very often spurned the better.

Moreover, the impact of the economic process upon society has not always been uniform. Property relationships which spell misery and starvation for some, are for others the source of riches, prestige and power. Identifying their own good with the common good, men have very often rationalized selfishness into a virtue and proclaimed their devotion to self-interest as an act of piety and patriotism.

Organized religion itself, to the extent that it becomes institutionalized, tends to have a stake in the status quo so that, at times, it forgets the impulse which gave it birth, remaining enmeshed in the practical expediencies by which its machinery is kept going.

Sometimes men have been cynical enough to know better but have exploited religion for their own ends as they would exploit any other institution to which people are deeply devoted. Particularly where religion is part of the apparatus of the state, the ruling classes have often perverted it as an instrument of class use.

There are other exaggerated expressions of the socio-economic functions of religion that move in the opposite direction but which are equally dangerous. The dynamic behind change has at times taken on forms which have converted men into fanatics and bigots, as is illustrated by the careers of such men as the Jewish King Asa, the Zealots of 1st century Palestine, the Italian preacher-reformer, Savonarola, and Oliver Cromwell. They carried the struggle for change into areas where defeat was inevitable, bringing incalculable disaster upon their people. In the process of "changing," they were often willing to destroy relevant values which still inhered in the old order. Even the prophet Elijah heard the rebuke of the "still small voice" for the manner in which he had disposed of the 200 priests of Baal at the ceremonies before Mt. Carmel. These abuses in the functioning of religion are, of course, only reflections on the limitations of human nature and they have their counter-part in similar abuses in other institutions, like the family or the state.

VII

There have been those, and Marxists have been the greatest offenders, who, impressed with these abuses, tried to destroy religion itself. They not only misinterpreted the nature of the religious process and thus committed a grave injustice against an important area of human culture; they proclaimed warfare upon a loyalty which had a tremendous emotional hold on people, thus antagoniz-

ing many who might otherwise have been won to the cause of social reconstruction. And they forfeited the accumulated ethical energy in which all religious traditions abound and which could have been made to function in religion's historic role as the moral dynamic behind the pressure for social change.

The prophets did better. When they found that many of the official manifestations of religion were perverted in form and had ceased to contribute to the cause of human welfare, they did not proclaim a war upon religion itself. They proclaimed a reutrn to religion in its pristine character. They sought to re-direct it into more wholesome channels. With religion as with other institutions, like the family or the state, the men who know better must stand watch so as to guard against its perversion from an aid in man's quest for a good life into a detriment. Eternal vigilance is the price not only of liberty but of all the treasures of the good life.

Religion is an affirmative reaction to life, born out of the intuition that life is worth living, that it will support the deepest interests of man's nature. There are certain non-economic needs which man has and religion has been concerned with those as well. We have confined ourselves to the religious process at the point where it meets man's struggle for a livelihood. Religion has celebrated man's victory in this struggle. It has given him the inspiration to struggle harder, when necessary, against the world of nature and man in pursuit of these elemental needs. And it has given him the promise of vindication, complete and decisive, in the end.

Whether the universe will ultimately support religion's hopeful interpretation of life, we do not know. But this we do know: that, because men have been willing to order their lives on the faith that this interpretation is true, they have been able to achieve whatever goodness, whatever sweetness and light there is in the world. And it is this faith which gives men the energy and the imagination to press on to ever larger fulfillment.

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